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[Printed by Henry Kent Causton, Nag's Head Court, Gracechurch Street.]

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By a Charter of King Charles the Second, dated May 3, A. D. 1670, the Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated by the name of "THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY OF ADVENTURERS "OF ENGLAND TRADING INTO HUDSON'S BAY." Many rights and privileges were granted by this Charter, the two most important rights being those given in the following words:—"We have "given, granted, and confirmed, and for Us, our Heirs and Succes- "sors, do give, grant, and confirm unto the said Governor and Com- "pany and their Successors, the sole Trade and Commerce of all "those Seas, Straits, Bays, Rivers, Lakes, Creeks and Sounds, in "whatsoever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance to "the Straits called Hudson's Straits, together with all the lands "and territories upon the countries, coasts, and confines of the "Seas, Bays, Lakes, Rivers, Creeks, and Sounds aforesaid, that are "not already actually possessed by or granted to any of our Sub- "jects, or possessed by the Subjects of any other Christian Prince "or State." 1670

In 1671 the Company sent out a ship to Hudson's Bay, under the command of Charles Bailey, whom they appointed Governor of the Territories and Forts they had established in the Bay previous to incorporation. 1671

In 1682 the French for the first time entered the Bay, and in that and the following years did much damage to the trade and property of the Company. In 1687 Commissioners were appointed by the 1682 1687



171153

Kings of England and France to consider the complaints made by the Company against the French. The English Commissioners reported their opinion that His Majesty (James the Second) and his Subjects had a right to the whole Bay and Straits of Hudson, and to the sole trade thereof. They further advised His Majesty to support the Company of Hudson's Bay in the recovery and maintenance of those rights. A remonstrance was subsequently addressed to the the French King asserting this claim, and demanding full satisfaction for the wrongs done to the Company. None appears to have been
1689 given; and in 1689 these wrongs were mentioned in the declaration of war against France made by William the Third They were after-
1697 wards considered in the Treaty of Ryswick, in 1697.

1713 The French continued to hold hostile possession of the Forts of the Company until the Peace of Utrecht, in 1713, when the Bay and Straits of Hudson, together with all lands, seas, sea-coasts, rivers, and places situate in the said Bay, and which belong thereunto, were restored to Queen Anne. By a commission under her royal hand and seal, Queen Anne gave the territories up to Capt. Knight and Mr. Kelsey, who were appointed by the Company as their Agents to regain posse

1744 In 1474 Parliament voted a sum of £20,000 for the discovery of the
1746 North-West passage, and in 1746 an expedition was set on foot by some private adventurers in hopes of obtaining this reward. That expedition was unsuccessful, but its originators applied to King George the Second for a Charter similar to that possessed by the Company, in order to enable them to prosecute further their attempts. His Majesty referred this petition to the Law Officers of the Crown, acted on their advice, and did not assent to its prayer. Another petition being afterwards presented to Parliament, and a Committee appointed to enquire into its merits, evidence was taken, and a Report presented to the House. Upon consideration of that Report in a Committee of the whole House, the House refused, on a division of 65 to 29, to interfere with reference to the rights claimed by the Company under their Charter.

As long as Canada was held by the French the opposition of wandering traders (coureurs de bois) was insufficient to induce the Company to give up their usual method of trading Their servants waited at the Forts built on the coast of the Bay, and there bought by barter the furs which the Indians brought from the interior. But after the
1763 cession of Canada to Great Britain in 1763, British traders, following

in the track of the French, penetrated into the countries lying to the north-west of the Company's territories, and by their building Factories, brought the market for furs nearer to the Indian seller. The Company, finding their trade seriously affected, extended the field of their operations, and sent parties to establish themselves in the interior. In process of time all smaller opposing interests were absorbed, either by purchase or coalition, in the North-West Company of Montreal, which thus became the sole rival and competitor to the Hudson's Bay Company. During many successive years a most disastrous contest was carried on between those two Companies. Wherever one Company established a trading post, there at once the other Company also commenced operations. This system of close competition rapidly produced a general state of disorganization, resulting in scenes of violence and bloodshed between the Indians, the trappers and the traders in the interests of the rival Companies.

The Hudson's Bay Company had built their posts up to 1811 principally for the purposes of the fur trade; but in that year they ceded to the Earl of Selkirk a tract of land, near the Red River, for the establishment of an agricultural Colony. Colonists were brought from Scotland, whose chance of success was defeated by the effects of rivalry in the fur trade. After undergoing great vicissitudes, the massacre of the Governor and principal men of the Colony nearly completed its ruin in 1816. Full particulars of the lamentable events of that period will be found in the records of the Colonial Office, and in papers already presented to Parliament.

1811

1816

In 1821, both Companies having suffered severely from the ruinous effects of their competition, made arrangements by which they became an united interest under the management of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the same year the Home Government, to whom the state of the country had long been a subject of difficulty and anxiety, passed the Act 1 & 2 Geo. IV., cap. 66, under which a License was granted by the Crown to the Hudson's Bay Company, for the exclusive trade of the whole Indian Territories not already included in the Company's Charter. That License, renewed in 1838, again terminates in 1859.

1821

1838

Under this exclusive system, trade has been successfully maintained and extended. The Foreign Fur Companies in Oregon and New Caledonia, on the west of the Rocky Mountains, have been driven out of the field, and British Goods have become almost exclusively the articles of barter with the Indians, in the place of foreign commodities.

1839 In 1839 the Russian Fur Company leased a portion of their territories to the Hudson's Bay Company, and also, in 1842, entered into
1842 an agreement to discontinue the sale and gift of spirits wherever they had dealings with the Indians.

During the times of opposition, the Indians trading with the rival Companies derived little good and much harm from their intercourse with the whites. New diseases were brought among them, and new vices were taught. The introduction and liberal sale of spirits caused excesses over which no control could be kept, and brought the Indian to want and misery. Hostile nations constantly at war with each other were uninterrupted in their outrages of plunder or massacre; the influence of the traders being seldom used to prevent bloodshed or to mitigate cruelty. An entire change took place when the rivalry of the two Companies ceased on coalition. It then became their interest to keep the peace between the tribes, as hunters were wanted, and peace was requisite for the protection of the hunter in his regular occupation. The physical condition of the native population had to be attended to; nothing being so important to the prosecution of the fur trade as the encouragement of steady and industrious habits. The demoralizing influence of the unrestricted use of ardent spirits was checked by prohibiting their being given in exchange for furs. Into the extensive district lying west of Churchill and north of Cumberland House no spirits at all were allowed to pass, even for the use of the Officers and Servants of the Company. Elsewhere the supply was limited to small occasional gratuities, upon the periodical arrival of parties at the Forts, and to small quantities given to the frontier Indians in exchange for provisions, without a supply of which the trade could not be carried on. While the active hunter had thus no means of injuring his health and powers by drink, the less able or the less thrifty, the aged, and the sick were preserved from starvation during winter by the relief afforded them and their families from the different Posts. They were supplied with food and clothing, the food being always given gratuitously, and the clothing and other absolute necessaries paid for when their means allowed. The interests of the Company called for this kindly treatment, even if no higher or nobler motive made it imperative.

Previous to the monopoly established in 1821, the moral and religious improvement of the Indian tribes had been little attended to. Since that time missionaries of various creeds have been introduced into most places within the territories of the Company. They have preached and taught, built churches and set up schools. Aid has

been given by the Company in forwarding these objects: some of the Missionaries are their salaried Chaplains, and all receive assistance in their wants by gifts of money or grants of land,—by allowance of rations or house-room, and by the supply of free conveyance.

Nothing can better speak to the improved condition of the territories under the Company's rule than the fact, that while hostilities still occur on the frontier, where the illicit trade is carried on, between the native tribes; and while a fierce and bloody war has been for some time raging between the Americans and Indians, in the lately ceded territory of Oregon, peace has been kept in the Company's territories, and the authority of the law respected. The Company's establishments have afforded protection to the Americans and their plundered and houseless families; and the Company's Officers have successfully used their influence with the natives to mitigate cruelty and to discourage war.

The fur trade is the principal business carried on by the Company; the greater part of the territories possessed under their Charter, or over which they have control under their exclusive License, being, in point of soil and climate, unfit for cultivation or for the abode of any but Indians and wild animals. Owing to the inaccessibility of the country, and the precarious nature of the means of communicating with it, the Company are obliged to keep two whole years' supply of essential articles in advance, besides those of the current year. But for this reserve, in the event of the loss of a ship, not only the Indians, but the Servants of the Company would run the risk of starvation. The Company have one-hundred and ten Posts in Rupert's Land and the territory held under License, besides forty-five Factories in Canada, Labrador, &c. They have in their employment more than 1800 Servants.

The trade gives regular employment to seven ships, besides those taken up on charter for particular voyages. Some of these vessels sail yearly from London to Hudson's Bay, freighted with British goods, bringing home cargoes of furs. The rest are kept for the Pacific trade. The goods sent out to Hudson's Bay in June, 1857, will, in the usual course of things, be delivered at York Factory in the ensuing August, that month being the earliest period at which, on account of the ice, the ships can enter the Bay. The goods placed in the depôt at York, remain there till the spring of 1858, and will then be taken into the interior. Their arrival at their ultimate destination depends upon the distance of the posts, not reaching some stations, as

those on Mackenzie's River, till 1859 or 1860. They will have to remain in depôt till the following year, and then be exchanged for furs. The furs will be shipped for England in 1861 or 1862, and sold in London in the spring of 1862 or 1863. Thus, capital spent in 1857 may bring no return until five or six years after its investment. The goods sent out are almost exclusively of British produce and manufacture; and the regularity of the supply, combined with the superior quality of the articles, and the greater cheapness of price, has hitherto enabled the Company to compete with the Russian and American Companies, and the illicit traders on the frontier.

The number of Indians inhabiting the territories, and under the control of the Company, is supposed to be not less than 150,000. No certain information of their numbers in 1821 can be obtained, so as to test their increase or decrease since that year; but the Servants of the Company, who have had the best opportunities of forming a judgment on this subject, have no doubt that in the northern districts, the Indians have increased in numbers, but that the contrary has been the case in the neighbourhood of the frontier. The number of whites and half-castes is about 11,000, of whom about 7,000 are settled at Red River.

The territories under the management of the Company, are divided by the Rocky Mountains into two districts, the Eastern and the Western; each differing from the other in climate and physical characteristics. The Eastern district embraces the whole of Rupert's Land given by the Charter, and the valleys of the Mackenzie and its tributaries, which are held under the License. It is bounded on the side of the United States by the 49th parallel of latitude; on the side of Canada, by the height of land whose waters flow into Hudson's Bay; and on the north by the Arctic Ocean. It may be divided into—

1.—Barren grounds, uninhabitable by whites or Indians.

2.—Thickwood country, adapted for the residence of Indians.

3.—Prairie land, suitable for settlement and cultivation.

1. The Barren grounds lie on both sides of Hudson's Bay, stretching northwards from about the 55th parallel, and embracing all the lands between Labrador in the East, and Mackenzie River on the West. This vast region is, as its name imports, sterile,—devoid of timber and almost of vegetation. Visited by the Indian only at stated periods for the purposes of hunting; it is unfit for the abode of human beings, and valueless for commerce.

2. The Thickwood country surrounds the lower Coasts of Hudson s Bay, with an average breadth of 400 miles, and extends in a north-westerly direction up the valley of the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Sea. Rivers and Lakes cover half of this expanse. The climate is rigorous, and the soil poor and cold; the frost seldom leaving the ground for the whole year. The lands, however, abound in fur-bearing animals, and the waters with fish, so as to be peculiarly fit for the abode of Indians and the carrying on of the fur trade. Difficult of approach and uninviting in aspect, it offers little inducement to emigrants to settle in it.

3. The Prairie Lands lie to the westward of Lake Winipeg, reaching to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. No physical boundary divides them from the United States, the 49th parallel being the only separation. The Saskatchewan River forms their northern limit, where they join the Thickwood Country. The climate is severe, but healthy, with great extremes of heat and cold, and frequent sudden changes of temperature. On the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and thence north as far as Cumberland House, good land is to be found, producing fair crops of Wheat and other grain. Spring Wheat only thrives, fall-sowing having universally failed. Towards the west the soil is poor and thin, especially near the Mountains and around the numerous Salt Lakes. A sea of grass, with here and there a wooded Island, the country is better fit for pasture than for tillage. The want of timber for buildings, fences and fuel, will be a serious hindrance to the settlement of this district. The only coal to be found is, unfortunately, of so inferior a quality as to be useless. The Prairies are occupied or ranged over by the predatory Blackfeet Indians; more numerous and more warlike than any other tribes on the east side of the mountains, they are almost always at feud with the Cree Indians of the Saskatchewan. The disturbances arising from such warfare, and the annoyances these marauders might occasion to settlers, by stealing their horses, killing their cattle, or laying waste their lands, would make colonization extremely hazardous, or else demand the presence of a large protecting military force

In New Caledonia the climate, though variable, is milder than that of the region on the east side of the mountains. The country is generally wooded, rugged, and mountainous. In favored localities in the valleys, good soil is often found, and fair crops of grain have been produced. The whole district is, however, in the possession of savage tribes, and by superiority of soil and situation, offers to a settler no sufficient inducement to go so far to seek his fortunes. In the

Island of Vancouver, the climate is healthy, and the soil, in many parts which have been explored, good, and capable of producing large crops of grain; but the great distance from the mother country, and from any regular trading track, the savage races which have posssession of the interior of the island, and the greater attractions of other settlements with fewer drawbacks and greater advantages, present obstacles to its rapid colonization. The neighbourhood of California, and the Gold Regions, offering such attraction to the emigrant has seriously interfered with the exertions made by the Company to promote this end.

The Charter of the Company has from time to time, come under
1690 the cognizance of the Legislature. In 1690 the Company having been annoyed by constant question as to their powers of seizure and punishment of interlopers, and of their right to exclusive trade, petitioned Parliament for an Act to confirm the privileges contained in their Charter. An Act was passed for that purpose, but its duration was limited to seven years. The present rights of the Company are, therefore, those conferred by their original Charter, repeatedly recognized since the Act of 1690, by other Acts of the Legislature.

1708 In 1708, an Act of Parliament (6th Anne, cap. 37,) was passed, for the encouragement of the trade to America, declaring that it should be lawful for all Her Majesty's subjects to trade into any part of America where they might lawfully have traded before the passing of the Act, and not otherwise. On the petition of the Company, supported before a select Committee by counsel, a Clause was added, providing that nothing in the Act should extend to take away or prejudice any of the Estates, Rights, and Privileges of the Hudson's Bay Company.

1744 In 1744, when an Act was passed (18th Geo. II., cap. 17,) granting a reward for the discovery of a North-west passage through Hudson's Straits, it was expressly provided that nothing therein contained should extend, or be construed to take away or prejudice, any of the Estates, Rights or Privileges of or belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company.

1774 In 1774, an Act of Parliament (14th Geo. III., cap. 83), in describing the boundaries of Canada, says that they lie "northward" to the Southern boundary of the territories granted to the Merchant
1794 Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay. In 1794 the Treaty of Peace, Commerce, and Navigation concluded between Great Britain and the United States, gives the free right of passage

across the boundaries to the subjects of either State, the country situated within the limits of the Hudson's Bay Company excepted.

In 1803, an Act of Parliament (43rd Geo. III., cap. 138,) was 1803
passed to extend the jurisdiction of the Canadian courts to the Indian territories. This Act was considered not to apply to the Company's territories, because although their territorial position brought them within the Act, the civil and criminal jurisdiction already granted by the Charter took them out of it. In the convention of October 20, 1818, between Great Britain and the United 1818
States, the Eastern frontier of the two countries and the respective rights of fishery are established; nothing therein contained is to prejudice any of the rights and privileges of the Company.

In 1821, the Act giving the Crown power to grant Licenses for 1821
exclusive trade was passed. The first clause specially exempted the lands or territories heretofore granted to the Governor and Company of Adventurers trading to Hudson's Bay from the operation of the License. The fifth clause extended the provisions of the disputed Act of 43 Geo. III., cap. 138, making them of full force in and through all the territories heretofore granted to the Company. The last clause declares that nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect any right, privilege, or authority which the Governor and Company of Adventurers trading to Hudson's Bay are by law entitled to claim and exercise under their Charter; but that all such rights, privileges, authorities, and jurisdiction shall remain in as full force, virtue and effect, as if this Act had not been passed.

In 1846, in a Treaty made between Great Britain and the United 1846
States, the free and open navigation of the Columbia River was granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, and to British subjects trading with them. This privilege would be lost if the Company ceased to exist.

In the early days of the Company's existence, in time of war or loss, no steps were taken to proceed in the search of the North-West Passage; but in 1719, trade being profitable, and the war at an end, 1719
the Company sent out two Ships under the command of Captain Knight to look for the supposed passage. These ships, with their crews, were lost. In 1721, 1722, 1723, ships at the order of the 1721
Company sailed along the West Coasts of the Bay as far as Sir Thomas Roe's Welcome. In 1737, the Company fitted out two 1737
ships, which sailed to the north from Churchill River; but the Captain dying in latitude 62°, the crews turned back.

1740 In 1740, 1742, 1743, 1744, Captains Smith and Mitchell, Officers in the Company's Service, went round the Coasts of the Bay, and ascertained that there was no passage thence into the Pacific.

1771 In 1771, a report having been brought by some Northern Indians of the existence of a great river discharging itself into a Northern Sea, the Company sent Mr. Hearne to examine the country to the north of Churchill River, if any passage was to be found in those regions. He succeeded in discovering the Coppermine River, and in descending it as far as the Arctic Ocean. This expedition shewed that there was no North-West Passage through Hudson's Straits.

1790 In 1790 the "Beaver" sloop was sent on a voyage of discovery by the Company. The Captain left the ship at the mouth of Chesterfield Inlet, and proceeded in boats to explore. Finding no passage through Chesterfield Inlet, he returned to his vessel.

To the various Expeditions started by private enterprize, or set on foot by the Government, the Company have always given aid and information; but no expedition for discovery was undertaken by the
1836 Company themselves from 1790 until 1836, when Messrs. Dease and Simpson were sent out. These adventurous travellers, descending the Mackenzie River, explored the coasts of the Arctic Ocean as far as
1837 Point Barrow, in the year 1837. The next year they went down the Coppermine River, and discovering Victoria Land, surveyed and named the coast to the east as far as 106° longitude W.

1846 In 1846, Dr. Rae, the Company's Surgeon at Moose Factory, at the head of a party of twelve men, wintered in Repulse Bay; and in the next year, surveyed about 655 miles of land and coasts on the
1848 shore of Committee Bay. In 1848 Dr. Rae accompanied Sir John
1850 Richardson in his search for Franklin; and in 1850, led an Expedition by Great Bear Lake and the Coppermine River to the shores of the Arctic: 630 miles of coast on the southern shores of Victoria and Wollaston lands were surveyed, traced, and accurately laid down.

1853 In 1853 Dr. Rae again wintered on Repulse Bay with a party of seven men, having, as before, no fuel except for cooking: 1,100 miles of land and coast were explored in that season, and definite intelligence of the fate of Sir John Franklin and his party was obtained. Few labourers in the cause of science have done or suffered more than this gallant Officer of the Company.

The expense of these Expeditions, and the assistance rendered to Sir John Ross in 1850, have cost the Company very large sums of money. The whole of the North Coast of the American Continent, with the exception of a small portion of one hundred and fifty miles not yet accurately surveyed, has been carefully examined by the Officers of the Company. Indeed, but for the Fur Trade and its Adventurers, the greater part of the vast district north of the Canadas would still be a profitless and unknown region.

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